

DEPARTMENT NEWS

ACE

A key component of the ACE Program is for us learn in a dynamic and stimulating environment with many new opportunities. As a part of this philosophy both the Year 9 and 10 Accelerate classes visited the spectacular Roman Machine Exhibition at the Waikato Museum on Wednesday 4th June. This was a wonderful opportunity for us to travel back in time and experience the ancient culture of the Romans. We were able to relive the history and discover the extraordinary engineering feats achieved by the Roman Imperial State between 52BC – 476AD.

On arrival at the museum, we were invited into a lecture theatre by Jennifer - who was one of three very accomplished staff employed to conduct 'education' tours at the museum. We began our journey 'back in time' by listening to a presentation entitled 'Rome wasn't built in a day'; a classroom overview which focussed predominantly on Roman architecture, roads and aqueducts. For the future architects, engineers, town planners and social science gurus among us, we were captivated from the outset! The videos and text focused on the science behind the structural design projects, that (by bringing fresh water into the cities, separating sewage from pure water sources and instituting bathing houses for hygiene etc.) hastened to improve public health and eradicate disease.

It went into detail on the vast complexity and imagination that the Romans had to create such famous and awe inspiring building designs as the Colosseum and the Pantheon in Italy. The YouTube clips were both funny and explanatory, planting the seed for what it would have been like to be a Roman 'back in the day'. Fortunately we weren't eating lunch when we watched a clip on the Roman toilets. Irrespective of the lavish décor, enjoying a social outing to a public latrine, to 'do one's business' among friends, didn't seem to hold a lot of appeal for our generation! The buckets with 'sponges on a sticks' technique...even less so!

The highlight of the trip was soon to follow, with the two classes separating to take turns touring the 'Rome at War' exhibition in the gallery, whilst the other class attended the Roman workshop. For the latter activity, 'boys being boys', it wasn't long before all hands were busy crafting catapults (based on true Roman design) and fashioning gambling cups, to shoot dice with; a popular activity for Roman soldiers resting 'behind the lines' at war! Upstairs, ACE students were being wowed by such ingenuity as the invention (or adaptation from other cultures) of the odometer, water clock, spirit level, pulley systems and arch design technology, used to support massive bridges, buildings and of course, the aqueducts. The craftsmanship was spectacular, the artefacts and replacers' - fashioned from stone and highly varnished wood - were both impressive and precise; truly immersing us in the Roman world.





Given the opportunity, the boys were eager to don the Roman Armour and take up arms in a ready-made garrison formation. With shields held aloft to stop spears penetrating the ranks, it wasn't long before the ubiquitous smartphones came out to take a variety of 'selfies'! Tour over, we combined back together in the lecture theatre to watch a presentation on Julius Caesar. The facts and information was exciting and fun to listen to as we relaxed with our cut lunches, in comfortable surrounds. Having our devices with us proved a real coup, as it enabled us to take photos and recordings in situ, which (post class trip) have proven to be memories of a lifetime.

Finally, 9ACE and 10ACE would like to thank the following people for their support. Mrs J Hignett at the student counter for handling the permission slips and money, a big and often thankless job. Mrs C Breadmore in reception for booking our bus to travel to Hamilton and Mr M Stone who accompanied us on our field trip with Whāea Jacque. We know for a fact that he enjoyed the exhibition as much as we did and was amazed to discover that 'plumbers' got their professional name from the Latin word for lead which is Plumbum! Lead being used to line the aqueducts throughout Europe; the high alkaline content in the water, coating the lead and preventing lead poisoning among the Roman people! Good to know!

In keeping with our tour, the Year 9 and 10 Accelerate classes of 2014, would like to acknowledge our Principal Mr Grinter for this valuable educational trip. He would be proud to know that RBHS became for one day, SPQR Senātus Populusque Rōmānus - The Senate and People of Rome!



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